

ABSTRACT

This report describes three very small studies of the history and archaeology of Delaware, each undertaken during planning for a small transportation project. The investigations were performed by the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. (Berger), on behalf of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). Despite the small size of the projects, they did contribute to our knowledge of Delaware's past. After all, small communities, obscure events, and the lives of ordinary people are just as much a part of history as big cities, famous battles, and the lives of presidents.

The first of the three projects was the construction of a light rail station on South College Avenue in Newark, Delaware; the second was the proposed construction of an emissions testing facility on the property known as the Hessler Industrial Park just south of Wilmington; and the third was the improvement of the intersection of Routes 7 and 58 (Stanton Road and New Churchman's Road). The investigations at all three sites included archaeological surveys and background historical research.

The Newark Light Rail Station is located along the Amtrak Northeast Corridor tracks south of Newark, in a corner of the parking lots for the Chrysler Corporation plant. Historical research showed that several structures had stood in approximately this location. One of these was a large brick house known as Linden Hall, built in the 1840s, that served for a time as a boarding school for girls. The school was a leader in women's education in Delaware, and it was associated with two important educational figures. However, archaeological testing showed that the physical remains of the school had been largely destroyed by later development.

The Hessler Industrial Park is located on U.S. 13, adjacent to a small, marshy stream and 300 feet from the Christina River. Historical research showed that in the nineteenth century the property belonged to large landowners who are known to have lived elsewhere, including a governor of Delaware, Thomas Stockton. Parts of the project area had been disturbed by grading, and parts were buried under fill more than three feet deep. The remainder was shovel tested, and one archaeological site was discovered. The Hessler Site consisted of a rather thin scatter of nineteenth-century household artifacts and prehistoric stone artifacts, all recovered from plowed soils. The historic artifacts were most likely trash from a house that stood outside the project area. The prehistoric artifacts probably represent occasional camping by Native Americans who were hunting or gathering plants in the nearby wetlands. Because of its low integrity and vague associations, the site did not appear to be potentially significant.

Improvements to the Route 7/Route 58 intersection, near the Delaware Technical College, include the construction of several ramps, the relocation of an access road northeast of the intersection, and the relocation of softball and soccer fields belonging to the College. Much of the project area had been disturbed by recent construction, so archaeological testing was focused on the Technical College grounds. Historical research did not indicate any possible dwellings in the project area, so the survey focused on the possibility of prehistoric occupations. Several important prehistoric archaeological sites, among them the Clyde Farm and Delaware Park sites, are close by, and the project area includes well-drained rises adjacent to wetlands that were thought to be good locations for prehistoric sites. However, no archaeological sites were discovered in the project area.

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